



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

09/693,342

10/20/2000

Patrick McErlean

FKC-103US

8467

23122

7590

12/23/2003

RATNERPRESTIA

P O BOX 980

VALLEY FORGE, PA 19482-0980

EXAMINER

DUONG, THOMAS

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2143

DATE MAILED: 12/23/2003

3

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/693,342

Applicant(s)

MCERLEAN, PATRICK

Examiner

Thomas Duong

Art Unit

2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 October 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 20 October 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
2. Claims 1-4, 8-13, 15-20 and 24-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spagna (US006021427A) and in view of Oles et al. (US006571225B1).
3. With regard to *claims 1-2, 8-13, 15-18 and 24-35*, Spagna reference discloses,
 - a distribution module, arranged to distribute said received electronic messages amongst a plurality of first agents depending on the respective routing information associated with each message; (Spagna, col.3, lines 45-48; col.9, lines 43-47; col.9, line 66 – col.10, line 10; modules 48 and 50 on sheet 7, fig.6).
 - at least one mail client, arranged to render to one or more of said first agents electronic messages distributed thereto, the or each mail client including: (Spagna, col.3, lines 45-48; col.9, lines 47-52; module 42 on sheet 7, fig.6).

- *means, responsive to an input from one of said first agents in respect of a first rendered message, for causing a second electronic message to be generated, which second electronic message includes at least part of said first electronic message; (Spagna, col.2, lines 26-29; col.6, lines 63-65; col.11, lines 1-5; modules 12 and 18 on sheet 3, fig.3).*
- *means for generating a routing tag, which routing tag includes data for determining how said second electronic message is routed by said electronic processing system; wherein the mail client is arranged to cause said routing tag to be included in said second electronic message and to cause said second electronic message to be sent out of said electronic processing system, (Spagna, col.1, lines 19-21; col.2, lines 14-16; col.3, lines 18-21; col.6, lines 24-57; col.11, lines 1-5; modules 130 and 132 on sheet 5, fig.4b).*

However, Spagna reference does not explicitly disclose,

- *a classification module, arranged to cause said received electronic messages to be analyzed in order to determine how said received electronic messages are routed within the electronic processing system, and to assign to said received electronic messages respective routing information;*
- *the classification module being arranged to, upon return of said second electronic message, or a derivative thereof, to said electronic processing system, to detect said routing tag in said returned electronic message and,*

upon detection of said routing tag, to cause said returned second electronic message, or derivative thereof, to be processed based on said data included in said routing tag.

Oles teaches,

- *a classification module, arranged to cause said received electronic messages to be analyzed in order to determine how said received electronic messages are routed within the electronic processing system, and to assign to said received electronic messages respective routing information; (Oles, col.1, lines 13-25, lines 29-59).*
- *the classification module being arranged to, upon return of said second electronic message, or a derivative thereof, to said electronic processing system, to detect said routing tag in said returned electronic message and, upon detection of said routing tag, to cause said returned second electronic message, or derivative thereof, to be processed based on said data included in said routing tag. (Oles, col.1, lines 13-25, lines 29-59; Spagna, col.1, lines 19-21; col.2, lines 14-16; col.3, lines 18-21; col.6, lines 24-57; col.11, lines 1-5; modules 130 and 132 on sheet 5, fig.4b).*

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine Oles reference with Spagna reference to enable an automated machine response to electronic messages or to simply assure that the messages reach the correct human recipient.

4. With regard to *claims 3-4 and 19-20*, Spagna and Oles references disclose the invention substantially as claimed,

See *claims 1 and 17* rejections as detailed above.

Furthermore, Spagna reference discloses,

- *wherein said data included in said routing tag includes means for identifying an agent, or group of agents, associated with said electronic processing system* (Spagna, abstract; col.3, lines 18-26; col.6, lines 24-57).

5. *Claims 5-7, 14 and 21-23* are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spagna (US006021427A), in view of Oles et al. (US006571225B1) and in further view of Wanderski et al. (US006519617B1).

6. With regard to *claims 5-7, 14 and 21-23*, Spagna and Oles references disclose the invention substantially as claimed,

See *claim 1 and 17* rejections as detailed above.

However, Spagna and Oles references do not explicitly disclose,

- *wherein said routing tag comprises an opening tag element and a closing tag element for delimiting respectively the beginning and the end of the routing tag*
- *wherein said routing tag comprises an alphanumeric string and said classification module is associated with an alphanumeric string parser*

Wanderski teaches,

- *wherein said routing tag comprises an opening tag element and a closing tag element for delimiting respectively the beginning and the end of the routing tag (Wanderski, col.2, lines 27-52; modules 400, 500 and 550 on sheet 4, fig.4, 5A and 5B).*
- *wherein said routing tag comprises an alphanumeric string and said classification module is associated with an alphanumeric string parser (Wanderski, col.2, lines 9-26).*

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine Wanderski reference with Spagna and Oles references to take advantage of a well-formed language such that automated, dynamically-selected transformations (such as those that will indicate a user's current context) can be applied to the document (in this case an electronic message).

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

- Mertama et al. (US006629130B2)
- Kamakura et al. (US006076101A)
- Youn (US006219691B1)
- Eichstaedt et al. (US006654735B1)


8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas Duong whose telephone number is 703/305-1886. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30AM - 4:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Wiley can be reached on 703/308-5221. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703/872-9306 for regular communications and 703/872-9306 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703/305-3900.

Thomas Duong (AU2143)

December 15, 2003


DAVID WILEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100